

April 5, 2012

Dear Friends,

We hope you enjoy this week's edition of the Newsflash!

Sincerely,

The Firelight Team

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(Call for Proposals) MLDI's Funding and Support for NGOs

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(Call for Expression of Interest) Humanitarian Innovation Fund's Large Grant Facility is now open

The Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF) supports organizations and individuals to identify, nurture and share innovative and scalable solutions to the challenges facing effective humanitarian assistance. It is currently accepting proposals for its Large Grant Facility.

The Large Grant Facility provides grants from £75,000. These grants will be allocated to projects with an implementation period of up to 18 months. These grants will principally support the development, implementation and testing of an innovation.

Although individual organizations can apply, HIF strongly encourages consortia applications that bring together a range of actors and draw on a relevant diversity of knowledge, experience and expertise. For consortia applications a lead applicant must be identified. Lead applicants must be either (a) a non-profit institution such as a non-governmental organization; (b) a public or governmental institution; (c) an academic or research institution.

To submit an application, applicants are required to submit a short Expression of Interest for an initial eligibility screening before completing a Full Proposal. Eligible applicants will then be invited to submit a Full Proposal for review by the HIF Grants Panel.

The deadline to submit Expression of Interest is 22 April 2012. HIF also offers

Small Grant Facility to provide support of up to £20,000 for the recognition, invention and dissemination of an innovation. You can submit applications for the Small Grant Facility year round.

For more go to: <http://www.humanitarianinnovation.org/funding>

(Call for Proposals) MLDI's Funding and Support for NGOs

The Media Legal Defence Initiative (MLDI), the UK-based organization which supports initiatives to enhance the legal knowledge, skills and effectiveness of those working in the field has announced a funding opportunity to support NGOs around the world. NGOs working for legal assistance or litigation activities which safeguard or advance media freedom can submit proposals for funding support.

MLDI is working to help build a strong global legal defence network for independent media and it makes grants to support organizations and projects delivering legal support to journalists. Currently MLDI funds a small number of organizations based in Southeast Asia, Central Asia, Central Europe, Africa and Central and South America. The aim is to expand this network and achieve better local-level access to legal assistance for independent media outlets, journalists and bloggers who lack the financial means to access legal support at commercial rates.

MLDI is open to grant proposals from national organizations to pursue one or both of the following activities:

- Provide legal assistance for independent journalists or media outlets who face legal proceedings because of their work;
- Engage in strategic litigation to bring local law and practice in media cases in line with international standards on freedom of expression.

Priority will be given to proposals that respond to a demonstrated need on the ground, increase the geographical coverage of the Media Legal Defence Initiative and are likely to have a high impact on protecting media freedom.

Grants awarded by MLDI are usually for a 12-month period and range in size between GBP5,000 and GBP25,000.

For more go to: <http://www.mediadefence.org/page/funding-and-support-ngos>

(Webinar) An Introduction to Basic Proposal Writing for NGOs in Developing Countries

The Webinar on “Basic Proposal Writing: An Introduction for Developing Country NGOs” will be organized on April 10, 2012 at 11:30-13:00 GMT.

This introductory course is ideally suited for NGOs and new fundraisers in developing countries who want to build their capacity through an understanding of basic proposal writing for NGOs and individuals who want to develop their professional skills and effectiveness.

The Basic Proposal Writing webinar will provide introductory information on the following topics:

- What are donors looking for in proposals?
- Setting priorities and goals and what information is required
- Organizing your information and telling a compelling story

For more go to: <http://webinars.fundsforngos.org/proposal-writing/upcoming-webinar-basic-proposal-writing-introduction-developing-country-ngos/56/>

(Article) **What Exactly Does 'sub-Saharan Africa' Mean?**

It appears increasingly fashionable in the West for a number of broadcasters, websites, news agencies, newspapers and magazines, the United Nations/allied agencies and some governments, writers and academics to use the term ‘sub-Sahara Africa’ to refer to all of Africa except the five predominantly Arab states of north Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt) and the Sudan, a north-central African country. Even though its territory is mostly located south of the Sahara Desert, the Sudan is excluded from the ‘sub-Sahara Africa’ tagging by those who promote the use of the epithet because the regime in power in Khartoum describes the country as ‘Arab’ despite its majority African population.

But the concept ‘sub-Sahara Africa’ is absurd and misleading, if not a meaningless classificatory schema. Its use defies the science of the fundamentals of geography but prioritises hackneyed and stereotypical racist labelling. It is not obvious, on the face of it, which of the four possible meanings of the prefix ‘sub’ its users attach to the ‘sub-Sahara Africa’ labelling. Is it ‘under’ the Sahara Desert or ‘part of’/‘partly’ the Sahara Desert? Or, presumably, ‘partially’/‘nearly’ the Sahara Desert or even the very unlikely (hopefully!) application of ‘in the style of, but inferior to’ the Sahara Desert, especially considering that there is an Arab people sandwiched between Morocco and Mauritania (northwest Africa) called Saharan?

Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, the five Arab north Africa countries, do not, correctly, describe themselves as Africans even though they unquestionably habituate African geography, the African continent, since the

Arab conquest and occupation of this north one-third of African territory in the 7th century CE. The Western governments, press and the transnational bodies (which are led predominantly by Western personnel and interests) have consistently 'conceded' to this Arab cultural insistence on racial identity. Presumably, this accounts for the West's non-designation of its 'sub-Sahara Africa' dogma to these countries as well as the Sudan, whose successive Arab-minority regimes since January 1956 have claimed, but incorrectly, that the Sudan 'belongs' to the Arab world. On this subject, the West does no doubt know that what it has been engaged in, all along, is blatant sophistry and not science. This, however, conveniently suits its current propaganda packaging on Africa, which we shall be elaborating on shortly.

It would appear that we still don't seem to be any closer to establishing, conclusively, what its users mean by 'sub-Sahara Africa'. Could it, perhaps, just be a benign reference to all the countries 'under' the Sahara, whatever their distances from this desert, to interrogate our final, fourth probability? Presently, there are 53 so-called sovereign states in Africa. If the five north Africa Arab states are said to be located 'above' the Sahara, then 48 are positioned 'under'. The latter would therefore include all the five countries mentioned above whose north frontiers incorporate the southern stretches of the desert (namely, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad and the Sudan), countries in central Africa (the Congos, Rwanda, Burundi, etc., etc), for instance, despite being 2000-2500 miles away, and even the southern African states situated 3000-3500 miles away. In fact, all these 48 countries, except the Sudan (alas, not included for the plausible reason already cited), which is clearly 'under' the Sahara and situated within the same latitudes as Mali, Niger and Chad (i.e., between 10 and 20 degrees north of the equator), are all categorised by the 'sub-Sahara Africa' users as 'sub-Sahara Africa'.

2012 WORLDWIDE CLASSIFICATORY SCHEMA?

To replicate this obvious farce of a classification elsewhere in the world, the following random exercise is not such an indistinct scenario for universal, everyday, referencing:

1. Australia hence becomes 'sub-Great Sandy Australia' after the hot deserts that cover much of west and central Australia.
2. East Russia, east of the Urals, becomes 'sub-Siberia Asia'.
3. China, Japan and Indonesia are reclassified 'sub-Gobi Asia'.
4. Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam become 'sub-Himalaya Asia'.

5. All of Europe is 'sub-Arctic Europe'.
6. Most of England, central and southern counties, is renamed 'sub-Pennines Europe'.
7. East/southeast France, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia are 'sub-Alps Europe'.
8. The Americas become 'sub-Arctic Americas'.
9. All of South America, south of the Amazon, is proclaimed 'sub-Amazon South America'; Chile could be 'sub-Atacama South America'.
10. Most of New Zealand's South Island is renamed 'sub-Southern Alps New Zealand'.
11. Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama become 'sub-Rocky North America'.
12. The entire Caribbean becomes 'sub-Appalachian Americas'.

RACIST CODING

So, rather than some benign construct, 'sub-Sahara Africa' is, in the end, an outlandish nomenclatural code that its users employ to depict an African-led 'sovereign' state - anywhere in Africa, as distinct from an Arab-led one. More seriously to the point, 'sub-Sahara Africa' is employed to create the stunning effect of a supposedly shrinking African geographical landmass in the popular imagination, coupled with the continent's supposedly attendant geostrategic global 'irrelevance'.

'Sub-Sahara Africa' is undoubtedly a racist geopolitical signature in which its users aim repeatedly to present the imagery of the desolation, aridity, and hopelessness of a desert environment. This is despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of one billion Africans do not live anywhere close to the Sahara, nor are their lives so affected by the implied impact of the very loaded meaning that this dogma intends to convey. Except this steadily pervasive use of 'sub-Sahara Africa' is robustly challenged by rigorous African-centred scholarship and publicity work, its proponents will succeed, eventually, in substituting the name of the continent 'Africa' with 'sub-Sahara Africa' and the name of its peoples, 'Africans', with 'sub-Sahara Africans' or, worse still, 'sub-Saharans' in the realm of public memory and reckoning.

For more go to: <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/features/79215>

(Article) Water Thinking: The Peer Water Exchange manages diverse solutions and resources to fight the global water crisis.

The facts on water point to a universally acknowledged crisis: **More than 1 billion people lack access to safe drinking water; 6,000 children under age 5 die every day from water-related diseases; half the world's hospital beds are filled because of water-related diseases; and 2.7 billion people lack access to hygienic sanitation facilities that prevent contamination and provide dignity.**

There is no dearth of technological solutions to this tragedy. Yet successful projects to solve rural water problems require approaches other than technology—community organization, education, behavior change, ownership transfer, and long-term monitoring. These approaches, although necessary, create a complexity that has hampered our ability to take any solution to scale. Even with billions of dollars of funding over decades, we have not been able to reduce the size of the water crisis.

But the drinking water crisis can be solved. The Peer Water Exchange (PWX) has used a network approach to manage diverse solutions to and resources for the global water crisis.

TODAY'S FUNDING MODEL

To resolve the water crisis successfully, we need a healthy dose of criticism about current funding models and the disadvantages they create for solving social issues.

Management in the North: Foundations and NGOs are experts at raising money, but they find it hard to oversee small remote projects. BPRF was able to create a new global athletic event to build awareness of the water crisis, but managing projects in 14 countries was a challenge with no easy solution. Although I was a funder, was I really the right person to decide on projects? Wouldn't using existing field expertise result in better decisions?

Fundraising in the South: Implementers are experts in their fields, but they spend significant time on fundraising and managing donors and donor agencies. A large fraction of energy can be spent in beautifying an application or report instead of executing a project.

Reporting: Funding agencies spend time and resources on reporting, which often involves repackaging reports from the field. Raw data are hidden, and only

a tiny fraction of activity is reported.

Failures and learning: The entire philanthropic chain reports only good things and is unwilling to share mistakes, so no one learns from them.

Monitoring: Site visits are often a photo op and usually expensive. At BPN, we constantly balance the cost of travel with the cost of funding another project. Monitoring can and should be a learning, sharing, and teaching experience.

Cooperation and sharing: Implementers do not cooperate or share enough. They compete for resources and funding, which results in North-South communication instead of South-South dialogue.

All the points above contribute to the main problem with today's practices: lack of scalability. Even if we increased investment in the water sector using the current model, not all the money can be absorbed and put to effective use. We need a new approach, one that is scalable, efficient, and collaborative, combining transparency with effectiveness—one that attracts the vast investment commitment that this crisis demands.

WATER THINKING

The core problem when we look at the water crisis is the lens through which we structure it, which I call Vaccine Thinking. This lens has developed over centuries as a result of a string of scientific and industrial successes. It has culminated in a mindset that is now deeply ingrained in our psyche and completely integrated with our educational, economic, and governmental systems.

Vaccine Thinking seeks to find and deploy a single universal solution, a solution that can be mass-produced.

(It is used in projects to provide village-level electricity and in efforts like One Laptop per Child. But Vaccine Thinking has been unable to solve problems such as the water crisis, poverty, and climate change.)

To address the water challenge we need to use a different lens—one that allows us to structure the problem differently, to examine many diverse and partial answers and processes, and to set up new expectations of results. The water crisis does not have a universal solution. There are many solutions, and they all involve a behavior change to deliver results. To deploy diverse solutions we need a new mindset, one I call Water Thinking.

VACCINE THINKING VERSUS WATER THINKING

Dosage: Vaccine Thinking creates a one-time solution, a single dose, or projects involving a single set of transactions. Water Thinking creates a lifetime supply, requiring many different transactions, including preparatory and follow-up.

Point of impact: One cannot give water, unlike vaccines, to people. It has to be delivered to households or communities. Administering community-level solutions requires going to the site, bringing people together, and coordinating activities.

Solution type: Vaccines are universal—the same vaccine applies to all genders, ages, and races. Solutions to water supplies, especially in rural areas, are localized in climate, geography, culture, gender relations, and political structure.

Knowledge transfer: Vaccines involve no transfer of knowledge about how the vaccine works or how it was developed. Successful solutions for water in rural areas require knowledge transfer. Why water purity is important and how to establish a good source of water and keep it clean are questions whose answers need to be ingrained into a population as part of any water project.

Ownership transfer: Vaccines involve no transfer of ownership. Solutions to rural water problems need to be owned by the community for long-term success. In fact, if the community is not organized or does not desire to be self-sufficient, solutions are bound to fail.

Changes in behavior: Vaccine-based cures require no change in behavior. Social problems demand many changes in behavior. Water solutions need changes in water usage, hygiene, sanitation practices, and protection of the water supply.

Metrics: The metrics along the vaccination process can be captured easily. Solutions to water are very hard to quantify. For example, diarrhea rates are unlikely to go to zero immediately after the implementation of a project, but will produce good trends over time, often with spikes that may contradict progress.

Risks and failures: Our society accepts the risks and failures involved in creating a vaccine. We have the patience to keep funding cures for AIDS, cancers, and other diseases. Yet with small water projects we are very risk averse and respond negatively to failures. This drives behaviors that often misrepresent results, or focus on the successes only, both of which lead to the loss of much learning.

Funding and project size: For vaccines, we are able to centralize our funding. For social development projects in rural areas, the money has to be delivered in small chunks, something large institutions are not equipped to do. The management of thousands of small projects is one of the challenges of scale and

requires us to think differently from our large funding mentality.

For more go

to: http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/water_thinking?utm_source=Enews12_03_22&utm_medium=email&utm_content=link&utm_campaign=shah

As part of the Firelight Foundation's Capacity Building Program, Firelight provides "Newsflashes" to share relevant resources and information with our active grantee-partners via weekly emails and via post on a monthly basis. We hope that by facilitating access to information for grassroots, community-focused organizations, programming for children and families, as well as organizational development, is enhanced. Past editions of the Firelight Newsflash can be found on our website: <http://www.firelightfoundation.org/newsflash.php>.

We welcome your comments, feedback and ideas for upcoming Newsflashes at newsletter@firelightfoundation.org.